DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 346 076 SP 033 840

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TITLE School Community-College Collaboration: A Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study in Staff Development and a Professional Development Center.
PUB DATE Feb 92
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Teacher Educators (72nd, Orlando, FL, February 15-19, 1992).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *College School Cooperation; Delivery Systems; Elementary Secondary Education; *Faculty Development; Higher Education; *Inservice Teacher Education; Master Teachers; Program Descriptions; Program Effectiveness; *Public Schools; School Districts; Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Centers; Teacher Educators
IDENTIFIERS *Certified Trainer Systems; Fitchburg State College MA

ABSTRACT

This paper provides an overview and description of the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) program in professional development in public schools offered at Fitchburg State College (Massachusetts). The CAGS provides opportunities for people in the same school system to develop knowledge, skills, and teaching methodologies to work with adult learners; goals are tailored to each specific community; and staff development experts are created in the school system. The certificate enables veteran master teachers, specialists, and administrative staff to develop competence in the areas of organizational development, planned change, the design, delivery, management and evaluation of staff development programs, and action research to address the needs and goals of a school system. Thus the system is empowered to restructure through the collaborative efforts of all. Also described is the subsequent establishment of the Professional Development Center, which offers support to the goals of area school systems. Workshops, professional seminars, long-term networks, and consultation services enhance the quality of educational services and create a mutually rewarding relationship between the college, the community, and the individuals served. (Author/LL)

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SCHOOL COMMUNITY-COLLEGE COLLABORATION: A CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED GRADUATE STUDY in STAFF DEVELOPMENT and a PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER

FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE-FITCHBURG PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FITCHBURG, MASSACHUSETTS

Annual Conference

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATORS

72nd Annual Meeting
Orlando, Florida
February 15-19, 1992

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ABSTRACT

This document, presented to the Association of Teacher Educators on February 15th-19th; provides an overview and description of the Fitchburg State College Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) Program in Staff Development and the subsequent establishment of the Professional Development Center. Herein are presented the program goals, academic plan of study, and center activities. The Center through the leadership of the Advisory Board offers support to the goals of area school systems. Workshops, professional seminars, long-term networks, and consultation services enhance the quality of educational services and create a dynamic, mutually rewarding relationship between the college, community and the individuals we serve.

CERTIFICATE OF ADVANCED GRADUATE STUDY (CAGS)
FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE

The purpose of the Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study program in Professional Development in Public Schools is to enable veteran master teachers, specialists and administrative staff to develop competence in the areas of: organizational development; planned change; the design, delivery, management and evaluation of staff development programs; and action research to address the needs and goals of a school system, thus empowering a system to restructure through the collaborative efforts of all.

Program Description

This three year, thirty-three credit graduate program is designed in collaboration with a given school system. CAGS candidates, all from the given system, undertake a formal study related to the school systems prioritized goals, implement staff development programs related to the system's goals, undertake research related to the system's goals. The Lunenburg School System participated in the three year program form 1987-1990. The Fitchburg School System is in the second year of the CAGS program.

CAGS Program in Staff Development-A Collaborative Project Between Fitchburg State College and A School System.

Goals of Fitchburg Circle Collaborative, CAGS

1. Development of collegiality among teachers and administrators as well as collaborative relationships with parents and the community;
2. Inclusion of multicultural perspectives in the curriculum and the appreciation of cultural diversity within the classroom;
3. Coordination of K-12 subject area curricula;
4. Development of teachers as educational leaders;
5. Creation of alternatives to mainstream approaches to include cooperative learning,interdisciplinary curricula, the overt teaching of higher order thinking skills, the enhancement of student self-esteem, etc.

THE PLAN OF STUDY

Courses:	Sequence:
Effective Instructional Processes: Theory to Practice PD 9000 6 credits	Year I
Dynamics of Planned Change EDLM 9100 3 credits	Summer I

Staff Development Programs: Design Management, and Evaluation (prepractica) PD 9200 6 credits	Year II
Research Seminar in Education PDEV 9300 3 credits	Summer II
Seminar and Internship in Staff Dev. Prog. PDEV 9400 6 credits	Year III
Graduate Thesis PDEV 9500 3 credits	Summer III
Master Field of Study Course (Elective) 6 credits	When desired

SCHOOL SYSTEM SUPPORT

School systems participating in the CAGS graduate program support graduate students in their formal academic study by providing a budget of approximately $2000.00 per year for the purchase of texts and instructional materials to support staff development programs; facilitate communication among building level administrators, central office staff and teaching staff in the system; support the candidates through participation in scheduled brainstorming/decision making sessions (approximately 2-3 per year); and, award in-service credit for staff development courses offered by the CAGS candidates to K-12 teachers in the school system.

PROGRAM COST

Graduate students in the CAGS program are responsible to pay for the courses they register for. Payment is made through the assignment of student teachers vouchers or by the student. The students are supported by system funds to purchase text books and instructional materials needed to implement staff development courses. Grants often fund program components.

INTENT TO PARTICIPATE

A system interested in collaborating with the College to develop a CAGS program for that system meets with the CAGS program chair to explore the possibility of developing such a program for their school system.

AFFILIATION

It is expected that as of December, 1992 the Professional Development Center will be the registered Massachusetts affiliate to the National Staff Development Council, Washington, D. C. The Professional Development Center is an example of how colleges, public schools and the community can collaborate, systematically interface and share human and physical resources thereby, directing change and restructuring systems to expand school services and meet the needs of children, professionals and families today and in the future.

The CAGS program and the establishment of the Professional Development Center further provide a model for the delivery of graduate education and lifelong learning experiences for professional educators.

WHAT IS THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER?

The Professional Development Center at the McKay Campus School-Teacher Education Center-Fitchburg State College was established in the Fall of 1990. Its purpose is to provide veteran teachers with the opportunity to participate in advanced study and to respond to professional development needs and requests of area educators, schools and systems. Through seminars, long-term networks, institutes and consultation services it supports the goals of area school systems, enhances the quality of educational services and sustains the dynamic, mutually rewarding relationship between the college and the community.

The Center includes a lending library of books, journals and audiovisual materials related to specific professional development topics and school restructuring. Lending privileges are extended to any area educator or school system at no charge.

WHO MAY USE THE CENTER?

The Center is open to all educational personnel in any role (central office staff, teachers, administrators, specialists, etc.) in public and private schools. College graduate and undergraduate faculty including adjunct staff utilize the center to initiate a professional development series or any other service in response to the needs of professional educators or area schools.

WHEN DOES THE CENTER OPERATE?

Flexible scheduling of courses, video conferences, seminars, etc. occurs throughout the school year and during the summer. Arrangements are made through the CAGS Graduate Assistant. The Center is open Monday, Wednesday,

Thursday, Friday from 9:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M. and on Tuesday from 2:30 P.M. to 7:30 P.M., and at other times by appointment. Use of the PDC space is scheduled through the Campus Center, first checking its availability with the CAGS Graduate Assistant and the office manager, Dorrie Daigle, McKay Campus School office.

Current Professional Development Center Programs:

Whole Language Network: A group of educators with a common interest in whole language who exchange ideas and share resources. Personal and Professional support is provided through such services as newsletters, a member directory, research perspectives, sharing sessions and local conferences.

Institute for the Healing of Racism: A forum for interested educators, human service personnel and others to explore issues related to institutionalized racism on a personal and community level.

Mentoring Institute: A forum for mentor teachers and other concerned educators to explore mentoring models and practices, share ideas and resources, and enhance their proficiency in support of provisional teachers and students enrolled in full-time clinical graduate programs.

Principals' Roundtable: A forum for school administrators to share and address goals, issues and school restructuring initiatives currently being studied and implemented in public and private schools in the region.

Project CREATE: A collegial group of educators who provide support for one another as they investigate and implement effective, research-based practices in education, work toward professional and personal goals and continue to strive toward excellence in their profession.

Multicultural Network: A forum where interested educators will explore issues related to the empowerment of ethnic minority students and the integration of multicultural issues across the curriculum.

Art Educators Series: A networking of art teachers to share special programs, expertise, knowledge, resources and community services.

These Networks, Institutes, Roundtables and Series are facilitated by either college faculty or professionals in the field who have initiated dialogue about a topic. They welcome all colleagues at the college and professionals within the field to come together to study and explore actions related to the topic.

New PDC initiatives are forming, some of them include:
A three year TEC Prep Collaborative Grant; A school restructuring initiative (summer institute proposal, 1992); North Central Ma Writing Project; Regional Gifted and Talented Grant; Community Service Component at College and area schools; etc.

In addition to the eight Networks, the PDC sponsors a Conference. A group of educators, the Whole Language Network will hold the Conference on Saturday, March 28, 1992 at the McKay Campus School. The conference theme is "1992 Sharing The Challenges". The conference will provide an opportunity for preschool, public and private school teachers, college faculty and community people to share with each other their areas of expertise, classroom practices, teaching methods and research perspectives.

Also, the Professional Development Center offers long-term staff development. Consultation services are offered to area schools and systems. The Applewild School, for example, has used the resources of the PDC to develop their three year staff development plan which is currently being implemented. Mariam Cronin, of the PDC, provides direct service at the Applewild School this year.

Seventeen people, seven of whom are faculty members, four superintendents, four principals, a personnel officer and an executive director serve as members of the advisory board of the Professional Development Center. One member of this Advisory Board serves as a consultant in planning for staff development programs at both The Franklin Perkins School and Montachusettt Regional Vocational School in Westminster. (see attachment A)

Participants of the Professional Development Center and the Advisory Board have a shared vision of where they want to go and resources to move toward that vision.

INFORMAL PROGRAM ASSESSMENT/SUPPORT DATA

At a meeting on October 2, 1991, teachers reported numerous changes in their teaching behavior. In keeping with the teacher emphasis upon ownership of their own change, the following teachers reflect selected emphasis on observations and self-improvements

Ms. Kay Alverson-Hillman observed that she feels more comfortable applying cooperative learning activities and helping students know, understand and value the opinion of others.

Changes in thinking about teaching and the encouragement of teachers to be more thoughtful and inquisitive about what they do are major goals of the CAGS program. Ms. Colleen Schwartz stated that "the program profoundly changed the way I relate to students. I think about what I did well, what wasn't so good and how I can improve upon it."

Inviting input and ownership of design and implementation from the very beginning i.e. ground-up involvement, is crucial to commitment and a sense of ownership in the program.

Mr. William McSheehy stated that the Circle Collaborative in Lunenburg (CAGS) continues to grow even though the formal relationship with Fitchburg State ended in 1989. It is an example of a grass roots movement. The staff development committee in Lunenburg is made up of teachers representing K-12, it is hands on, administrators are advised of staff needs and these needs are formally addressed through staff development program offerings. Mr. McSheehy said "teachers have empowered themselves, teachers are functioning as credible leaders. They hold status as professionals. Peer coaching and peer supervision are common practices that teachers are engaged and comfortable with. I am thrilled that staff development is ongoing, that it is a central part of the school system. I am enthusiastic that all this is happening. This system-based Staff Development is absolutely necessary, it is teacher driven, not top-down decision making. Teachers are the decision makers, they are exhibiting collegiality, they have common goals and movement toward these goals have resulted in concrete outcomes which benefit the entire school system. It is the way to go, it is natural and must continue to be supported."

Ms. Bonnie-Baer-Simahk cited that the PDC networks have created a sense of community and that problems and issues are no longer addressed in isolation. Another teacher stated that "I am the only one in my school who is using Whole Language in the classroom and I am grateful that I can come together with others who have the same interests. It helps to break down teacher isolation and increase teacher sharing." The Networks serve as a support system of teachers assisting teachers.

Mr. John Mara, an assistant principal, noted the sense of professional esteem that teachers derive from emphasis on teacher control and latitude. He further stated that teachers appreciate the opportunity to inquire into and experiment with their teaching. He identified the CAGS program as an important step in improving the situation that will ultimately benefit the children. John Mara said "people are not often recognized in their community for the professional expertise they have. The Professional Development Center allows college and school system faculty to come together to share ideas, knowledge and examples of theory operationalism in the classroom and with colleagues. Here is an opportunity to relate research to current practice and observe results in student learning and product development. When people are recognized as experts it raises their self-esteem."

Jean Morin stated that a shared vision allows us to cross barriers between administrators, teachers and college professors. It gives everyone an opportunity to talk about current issues and for self/staff development.

Thomas Crank affirmed his desire to share his renewed enthusiasm for teaching. "The program has given enthusiasm to veteran teachers and administrators in the system."

As the teachers comments attest, participants feel a shared ownership in this program. As their sense of ownership grows, motivation and excitement about teaching correspondingly increases. The teachers feel a sense of integrity, they feel empowered, free, and unique. Based on feedback from professionals in the field, the programs offered have been assessed by local administrator and participants to be successful.

The Fitchburg Collaborative grew out of a similar pilot field-based Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study program implemented from 1987 to 1990 in the Lunenburg Public School System. Staff completing that program currently direct for the Lunenburg Public School System on of the most comprehensive, system-based professional development series in operation. Two graduates of that program work as faculty/consultants to the Fitchburg program and in the Professional Development Center.

IN SUMMARY

In this paper we have presented the unique schooling experience of educators enrolled in the CAGS program in Staff Development at Fitchburg State College and the Professional Development Center.

Our experience with staff development leads us to believe that we have an effective model. The CAGS provides opportunities for people in the same school system to develop knowledge, skills and teaching methodologies to work with adult learners. Our goals are tailored for each specific community. Most importantly, we have created staff development experts in the school system.

Current literature and the shared perceptions and stated needs of teachers led to the creation of the Professional Development Center. The center has tremendous strengths and a need for growth. We are indebted to college staff and educators in the field for providing us with enthusiasm, creativity and tremendous energy in our early work; and to Fitchburg State College for providing fertile grounds for professional development ideas to grow!

1991-1992 School Year

Advisory Board of the Professional Development Center:

1. Dr. John J. Welch, Superintendent, Ashburnham-Westminster, MA
2. Dr. Michael Pregot, Superintendent, Gardner School System
3. Pelino A. Masciangioli, Asst. Superintendent; Leominster, MA
4. Paul Tresaloni, Personnel Officer, Leominster Public Schools
5. Burton D. Cofman, Principal, Laura A. White School, Shirley, MA
6. Thomas Lamey, Asst. Superintendent, Fitchburg Public Schools
7. Ronald Schofield, Nashoba Regional High School; Bolton, MA
8. Dr. Coral May Grout, Narragansett Regional School District.
9. Dr. Anne May, Special Education/Teacher Prep; Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA
10. Dr. Daniel Nomishan, ECES. Dept., Fitchburg State College Fitchburg, MA
11. Dr. Ronald Colbert, Principal & Associate Dean McKay Campus School, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA
12. Mary Cringan, Principal; Turkey Hill Md. School, Lunenburg, MA
13. Dr. Michele Moran Zide, Associate Vice President/Dean of Graduate and Continuing Education; CAGS Collaborative Director, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA
14. Dr. Charles Conroy, Executive Director, The Franklin Perkins School, Lancaster, MA
15. Dr. Elaine Francis, Special Education Dept., Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA
16. Dr. Karen LaRoe, Assistant Vice Pres. for Academic Affairs, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA
17. Dr. Shari Stokes, Associate Professor of Special Education, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, MA

Attachment A

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